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Church of Madonna
Fort Lee, Bergen County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-421

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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Church of Madonna
Fort Lee, Bergen County, New Jersey

Owner: Church of Madonna (Roman Catholic)

Date of Erection: 1830-35

Architect:

Builder: Jacob Riley

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: One with balcony and tower

Materials of Construction: Foundation - basalt stone

Exterior walls - basalt stone
trimmed with red sandstone

Interior walls - plaster on
brick

Floor 8" pine planks

Roof - pitch

Historical Data:

In 1829 Jacob Riley purchased from Nicholas J. Moore several hundred acres of land bordering on the Palisades. The following year he started the erection of the Church of Madonna completing it in 1835. A few years later a parsonage was erected at the rear of the church. About 1840 Riley donated several acres of ground as a cemetery adjoining the church to the north.

The church remained in the hands of the Riley family until 1890. In that year, it became the property of the Church of the Madonna. In 1911 Leonia West Slope Realty Company was the owner. Joseph Cummings purchased the church in 1931 and deeded it to the Church of Madonna which is listed as a corporation.

The land upon which the church stands was part of one of the first grants bordering on the Palisades. It was given to Samuel Moore by Major John Berry in 1726 and remained in the Moore family about a century.

The church is constructed of basalt stone gathered at the foot of the Palisades. It is built entirely of stone including the steeple.

Bibliography:

Material gathered by Wallace Dunlop, Bergen
County Office



Supervising Historian

Approved:



SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.
District Officer

Reviewed May 1939 - JAV